

## THE RED CAPE

By C. Langton Clarke

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"Such an infernal nuisance!" said Jack Somerville as he sat in his easy chair nursing a sprained ankle and scowling at his friend, Dick Callender. "What did you let go of the ladder for?"

"Sorry, old man," said the other; "but it was as much your fault as mine."

"And I had promised my aunt to meet a girl, a cousin of mine, who is coming to stay with her. It's nearly traintime now. Look here! You will have to go instead of me."

"I?" cried Dick, aghast. "Why, I shouldn't know her if I saw her!"

"Neither should I," growled the other. "Haven't seen her for years; but she will be wearing a red cape, so my aunt says, and that ought to be enough to identify her—a tall, dark girl with a red cape. Now, don't stand gaping. You have no time to lose. Take her in a cab to my aunt's and then come back here."

He pulled out his watch again with an impatient gesture, and Dick, anxious to stave off his share in the accident, hurried away.

As he lounged about the platform waiting for the train to arrive he remembered that the young lady's name had not been mentioned, or, if it had, he had entirely forgotten it. "I'll stick to the red cape," he said to himself, "and I can't go far wrong."

When the train at last arrived, Dick moved slowly along the line of cars, keeping a watchful eye on the passengers as they alighted, and his vigilance was rewarded by the sight of a tall, dark young lady wearing a scarlet cape and carrying several parcels.

"I beg your pardon," Dick began, diffidently addressing her. "I have been commissioned to meet you and escort you to the house. Jack intended to come, but he has sprained his ankle."

The young lady looked greatly distressed. "Oh, I hope he is not much hurt!" she cried as she clasped her hands over her bundles. "Poor Jack! I suppose you are a great friend of his?"

"We are excellent friends," Dick replied. "My name is Richard Callender. It seems an absurd thing to say, but Jack quite forgot to mention your name to me."

"That's very odd," replied the girl. "And you say you are such a friend of his! My name is Mary Heatherstone. Do you mean to say you have never heard John speak of me?"

"Oh, of course! What a chump I am!" cried the young man, with the fatal readiness to avoid explanations which was one of his characteristics.

"Now, tell me all about Jack," Miss Heatherstone said after she had been comfortably established in a cab and the young man had seated himself by her side. "Does he seem quite happy?"

"First rate!" said Dick. "Particularly since he became engaged."

The young lady smiled and looked pleased. "He has had plenty of time to get used to that idea," she said.

"Oh, I don't know!" Dick replied. "Two weeks is not such a very long time, you know."

The smile faded from the girl's face. "Two weeks!" she cried. "Why, he has been engaged for two years!"

Dick laughed. "I suppose you are thinking of that other little affair," he said; "but, really, that never amounted to anything. This time it is for good and all. He met Gertrude Gould for the first time two months ago, and it was all settled a fortnight ago at the tennis club ball. Good heavens! What's the matter?" The girl had caught him by the wrist, and her face was deadly pale.

"You are not deceiving me?" she cried. "No, I see that you are not. I must go home again. Tell the cabman to drive back to the station. Quick! Do as I tell you!"

She was fumbling with the handle of the door and was altogether in such an excited state that Dick, who was greatly taken aback to find himself face to face with a tragedy, complied with her instructions.

"Can I not help you in some way?" he said at last, being greatly moved by the sight of the girl's evident misery.

"What would you think," she asked, rousing herself, "of a man who would let the girl to whom he had been engaged for two years and who had left her home, all happiness, to be married to him, hear from the lips of a stranger that he had been false to his plighted word?"

"I should say that he was a cad!" replied Dick fiercely, and Miss Heatherstone smiled wanly through her tears at his vehemence.

As they were entering the vestibule of the railway station Dick felt his arm seized by his companion and, following the direction of her eyes, saw a young stranger of pleasing appearance approaching them.

"You will protect me from insult, won't you?" the girl asked breathlessly, and Dick felt that he would be quite equal to the occasion, though the other man was the heavier by many pounds.

The stranger advanced, smiling, until well within the range of Miss Heatherstone's stony gaze, when he stopped short, and his outstretched hand fell back to his side.

"Molly!" he said in great surprise. "What is the meaning of this welcome?"

"Let me pass," replied the girl in the tones of a tragedy queen. "I have discovered your peridy, and I am going home."

She pushed on, and the young man who had at first showed signs of an intention to block her progress, fell back.

"You are mad," he said, "and as for you, sir," addressing Dick, "I shall probably have a few words to say to you."

"When I have escorted this lady to the waiting room," replied Dick loftily, "I shall be happy to listen to anything you may have to say."

As soon as Dick and his charge had entered the waiting room Miss Heatherstone turned to him. "How nobly you ignored your former friendship!" she said. "You spoke to him as if he were beneath your notice and a complete stranger."

"Why, so he is," replied Dick, considerably mystified. "I never saw the fellow before."

"Am I going crazy?" the girl cried, sinking into a chair. "Didn't you tell me that he sent you to meet me; that he had sprained his ankle? A nice excuse, indeed!"

"Of whom are you speaking?" asked Dick, bewildered. "Of Jack?"

"Yes! Yes! That man! Jack—my Jack!"

"But that isn't my Jack. My friend is at home, as I told you, with a sprained ankle. I don't understand it at all. Mr. Somerville asked me—"

"Mr. Somerville!" cried Miss Heatherstone, sitting bolt upright. "Is that the name of the gentleman who sent you?"

"Of course it is," Dick answered, almost testily. "He told me to look out for a tall, dark girl with a red cape, his cousin, and—"

"And you mistook me for her? Oh, I see it all! Oh, Jack, Jack, how I have wronged you!" And, to Dick's consternation, the young lady immediately went off into a fit of hysterics, which necessitated the summoning of the attendant and the removal of the sufferer into an inner room for the application of restoratives.

While Miss Heatherstone wrestled with her attack of nerves Dick, horrified at the result of his mistake, hastened out into the vestibule in search of the other victim and found him leaning gloomily against a pillar. At first the outraged swain refused to listen to any explanation and seemed strongly inclined to make a personal assault upon the innocent cause of the mischief, but Dick's remorse and agitation finally disarmed him, and when they parted at the door of the waiting room they shook hands with expressions of mutual esteem and thankfulness that the error had been discovered in time.

When Dick entered the room where his friend was still nursing his ankle, the latter regarded him with considerable interest.

"What's the matter with you?" he asked. "You look as if you'd seen a ghost. Where is Mary?"

"I don't know," was the reply.

"Don't know!" shouted the other. "And you with her cape on your arm!"

Then Dick, looking down, found that he was still carrying the cape which Miss Heatherstone had handed to him in the waiting room.

"Isn't that the cape?" continued Jack Somerville angrily.

Dick burst into a laugh that was half hysterical.

"It's a red cape all right," he said, "but—but it was the wrong Mary that was in it."

### Signals on 'Change.

On the floor of the Stock Exchange there has been in vogue for years and is still in use a mute system of language by which telegraph operators convey orders to brokers whom they represent. It is done by movement of the fingers, and the purpose of it is to hide the nature of orders from other brokers. The plan is after this fashion:

When a telegraph operator receives an order to transmit to a broker, he will raise his index finger if the order is to buy at an eighth; reverse it if the order is to sell. Should the operator want to indicate other fractions each additional finger raises the limit an eighth. The fist clinched and thumb uplifted tells the broker that three-quarters is meant. When it comes to seven-eighths, that fraction is made by forming a right angle with the thumb and first finger, and, finally, if the even figure is wanted a waving movement of the hand is used.

This is the system adopted by nearly every active broker in making transactions, but to prevent others from following up their orders some have an independent notation device and will communicate by signs which are known only to the operator and the broker directly concerned.—Philadelphia Telegraph.

### The Modern Editorial.

An essay on "The Boston Newspapers" in the Bookman throws some light on the development of the modern editorial. The earlier newspapers had no editorials. Attempts to mold public opinion took the form of letters signed "Publius," "Junius" and like Latin names.

The writer in the Bookman claims for Boston the honor of originating the present editorial form. The Boston Daily Advertiser and Repository, the first successful Boston daily, was founded in 1813 and the next year passed into the hands of Nathan Hale, nephew of the spy of the Revolution. Hale began to substitute leading articles written in the office for those formerly furnished by the stalwart Romans—"Fabius," "Honestus," "Nov- Anglius," "Laco" and "Massachusetts."

The fashion set by the Advertiser was widely copied and at length became general. Mr. Hale came to take such pride in his innovation that when distinguished men like Everett and Webster offered articles for use as editorials he insisted on printing them as communications. Only the staff men were allowed to write the regular editorial comment.

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